



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

1230 YORK AVENUE · NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021

THE PRESIDENT

September 26, 1978

Professor Roger Hahn
Department of History
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

Dear Dr. Hahn:

I was very much interested to receive your precis on your project on the Laplace biography and related matters. The source of this was not clear when it arrived on my desk; but I am assuming that it was a prospectus for an intended special group at the Center for Advanced Studies in some forthcoming year. I am sure that you will have no trouble in persuading many people of the importance of your project, in view of the inherent interest in your central figure, and the very thoughtful approach that you have outlined for your biographic analysis.

It is hard to say what level of credibility can be achieved by any psycho-biographic explanation but you did ask for some resources in that field. If you have not already done so, I am sure that you would want to contact Dr. Vaillant from Harvard who is spending this year at the Center. He might well be the best informed secondary source for other contacts. And I am sure that you are already familiar with Gardner Lindzey's preoccupation and experience with very similar issues in connection with the collected autobiographies of psychologists that he has edited for some time. My own perspective on the intersection of psychology and history has been best informed by a book by Robert Jervis called "Perception and Misperception in International Affairs", published a couple of years ago by the Princeton University Press, which I commend to you very highly.

Finally, I hope that you may be visiting New York sometime in the not too distant future and that if so you will contact my colleague here, Professor James Hirsch. Dr. Hirsch is embarking on a biographic study

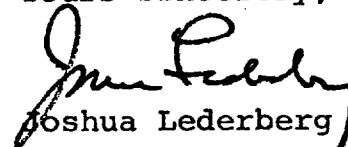
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of Paul Ehrlich and I am sure that there is a great deal to exchange about your approach to such writing that would be of considerable mutual benefit.

I do not know if time will permit me to take an active continuing role in the affairs of the Center; but in any case you have my best wishes personally and for your project.

Yours sincerely,



Joshua Lederberg